

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 EB-08 OES-06 HEW-04 COME-00
LAB-04 SIL-01 /096 W
-----241923Z 025626 /46

R 241700Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2332
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, IT
SUBJECT: ITALIAN POLITICAL ROUNDUP

1. THE FOLLOWING IS A ROUNDUP OF RECENT EVENTS ON THE
ITALIAN INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE.

2. THE SOCIALISTS (PSI): EX-SECRETARY AND FACTION LEADER
MANCINI HAS PERHAPS STARTED A NEW CRISIS WITHIN THE PSI.
HIS PROTEGE, ZUCCALA, HAS CALLED FOR A MEETING ON
JANUARY 26 OF PSI PARLIAMENTARIANS WHO ARE "DISSATISFIED"
WITH CRAXI'S SECRETARYSHIP. MANCINI THEN ORGANIZED A
PRESS CONFERENCE, HELD A WELL-ADVERTISED MEETING WITH
DE MARTINO, AND TALKED TO THE PRESS SOME MORE. THE
THRUST OF HIS COMMENTS WAS THAT THE PSI CANNOT REMAIN
INACTIVE BUT MUST TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO ESTABLISH AN
ACTIVE, INDEPENDENT ROLE IN THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL LIFE.
WHILE HE DENIED THAT HE WAS PROPOSING A NEW GOVERNMENTAL
FORMULA, HE DID SAY THAT THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT'S
POSITION WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY UNTENABLE AND THAT

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THE PSI MUST NOW BEGIN AN INTERNAL DIALOGUE ON THE
BEST MEANS OF GOVERNING THE COUNTRY.

3. MANCINI'S INITIATIVE WAS IMMEDIATELY AND BITTERLY
ATTACKED BY PSI LEFT-WING LEADER LOMBARDI WHO INTER-
PRETED IT AS THE FIRST MOVE TOWARD AN PSI/DC GOVERNMENT.
LOMBARDI ACCUSED MANCINI AND DE MARTINO AS BEING

PRIMARILY MOTIVATED BY A DESIRE TO REGAIN ACCESS TO THE PATRONAGE BENEFITS OF GOVERNMENT OFFICE. CRAXI'S SUPPORTERS, PARTICULARLY IN MILAN (SEE MILAN 0121), INTERPRETED MANCINI'S AND DE MARTINO'S EFFORTS AS AIMED AT CRAXI AND AS BEING AND REGAIN CONTROL OF THE PARTY FROM THE YOUNGER ELEMENTS LED BY CRAXI.

4. THE ABOVE DEVELOPMENTS TOOK PLACE AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF SPECULATION IN RECENT WEEKS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A DC/PSI OR DC/PSI/PSDI GOVERNMENT, SUPPORTED IN PARLIAMENT BY THE PCI, AS POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES TO THE PRESENT MINORITY DC GOVERNMENT. THESE POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES WERE CLEARLY REJECTED OVER THE WEEKEND BY AMENDOLA, SPEAKING AT CELEBRATIONS MARKING THE 56TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE PCI. HE SAID THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE PCI PARTICIPATE IN THE GOVERNMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, FOR WITHOUT ITS PARTICIPATION ITALY'S PRESENT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRISES CANNOT BE RESOLVED.

5. ABORTION; THE CHAMBER ON JANUARY 21 APPROVED AN ABORTION LAW, WHICH WOULD PERMIT ABORTION WITHIN THE FIRST 90 DAYS OF PREGNANCY BECAUSE OF DANGER TO THE MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH OF THE MOTHER, BECAUSE OF ADVERSE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL OR FAMILY CONDITIONS, BECAUSE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF CONCEPTION (E.G., RAPE), OR BECAUSE OF DANGER OF MALFORMATION OF THE CHILD. IT WAS LESS THAN THE MORE EXTREME PRO-ABORTIONISTS WANTED, AND FAR MORE THAN THE CHURCH DESIRED. THE ITALIAN BISHOPS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMMEDIATELY ATTACKED THE CHAMBER'S ACTION IN THE STRONGEST TERMS. IN THE CHAMBER, THE VOTE WAS 310/296, WITH ALL OF THE LAY PARTIES VOTING FOR IT EXCEPT THE RADICALS (WHO WANT COMPLETELY FREE ABORTION) AND WITH THE DC, MSI/DN, PR, AND THE ALTOATENSINI VOTING AGAINST. (THE CLOSENESS OF THE VOTE ALSO INDICATES THAT THERE WERE SOME DEFECTIONS FROM THE RANKS OF THE LAY PARTIES.)

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GIVEN THE CLOSENESS OF THE VOTE IN THE CHAMBER, AND THE FACT THAT THE DC AND THE IGH T HAVE A SLIGHTLY LARGER PERCENTAGE IN THE SENATE, MANY ARE PREDICTING THAT THE PROPOSED LAW WILL BE AMENDED THE TIGHTENED UP IN THE SENATE, BUT NO ONE IS PREDICTING THAT THE SENATE WILL REFUSE TO PASS SOME VERSION OF AN ABORTION LAW. THE ABORTION LAW, NOT BEING A GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL, IS NOT CONSIDERED A CONFIDENCE MEASURE AND THEREFORE WILL HAVE NO DIRECT EFFECT ON THE LIFE OF THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT.

6. ECONOMIC MEASURES: THIS MAY BE THE DECISIVE WEEK FOR THE GOVERNMENTS'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM. THE INDUSTRY-LABOR NEGOTIATION, BEGUN AT THE INSTANCE OF TH GOVERNMENT, ON WAYS OF CUTTING THE COST OF LABOR SHOULD COME TO A CONCLUSION THIS WEEK. ACCORDING TO REPORTS, SOME PROGRESS HAS UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN MADE (ROME 1148). WHETHER IT WILL BE ENOUGH TO MEET THE GOVERNMENT'S (AND THE IMF'S) CRITERIA REMAINS TO BE SEEN. ON THURSDAY (JANUARY 27), PICCOLI WILL CHAIR A MEETING OF PARTY PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC MEASURES
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(ROME 0699). THAT MEETING IS LIKELY TO HEAR NEW CALLS FOR AN EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD INCLUDE ALL PARTIES FROM THE PCI TO THE PLI. FINALLY, IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE WEEKLY CABINET MEETING (JANUARY 28) WILL APPROVE SOME NEW MEASURES ON THE COST OF LABOR AND RESTRICTIONS ON CONSUMPTION OF MEAT AND ENERGY.

7. A NEW PARTY? THE "NATIONAL DEMOCRACY" GROUP, WHICH IS IN THE PROCESS OF BREAKING AWAY FROM THE NEO-FASCIST MSI (ROME 20744), HELD AN ORGANIZING MEETING OVER THE WEEKEND IN PREPARATION FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF A

NEW PARTY TO BE HELD ON FEBRUARY 12 AND 13. IT IS CLEAR
FROM THE DISCUSSION AT LAST WEEKEND'S MEETING THAT THE

AIM IS TO FORM A PARTY OF THE RIGHT THAT IS RECOG-
NIZED AND ACCEPTED AS A "DEMOCRATIC" PARTY AND THUS
ESCAPE FROM THE ISOLATION TO WHICH THE MSI HAS BEEN
CONDEMNED. TO DATE, SEVENTEEN DEPUTIES AND NINE
SENATORS (ALL ELECTED ON THE MSI TICKET) ARE REPORT-
EDLY SUPPORTING THE FORMATION OF THE NEW PARTY. IF
THESE FIGURES ARE ACCURATE, THE NEW PARTY WOULD BE LARGER
THAN EITHER THE PSDI OR PRI, BUT IT IS STILL QUESTION-
ABLE WHETHER THEY WILL IN FACT BE ACCEPTED AS
"DEMOCRATIC" BY THE OTHER PARTIES ON THE SO-CALLED
"CONSTITUTIONAL ARC." BEAUDRY

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